
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September is Suicide Prevention Month

GRAND RAPIDS – So far this year, 47 suicides have been completed in Kent County. Six of those who died so far in 2015 were 19 years of age or less, the same number of suicides for that age group in all of 2014. We can work now to prevent another lost life. September is Suicide Prevention Month, and Thursday, September 10 is World Suicide Prevention Day. The Kent County Health Department wants you to know there is help available.

People considering suicide will sometimes talk or write about death or dying. Some will actually look for items to use in a suicide attempt, such as weapons and drugs. You may note dramatic mood swings or personality changes in someone who is suicidal, a loss of interest in daily activities, and/or hopelessness. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention suggests if you suspect someone needs help:

- Begin by telling the suicidal person you are concerned about him or her.
- Tell them specifically what they have said or done that makes you feel concerned about suicide.
- Ask if the person is considering suicide, and whether he or she have a particular plan or method in mind. (These questions will not push them toward suicide if they were not considering it.)
- Ask if they are seeing a clinician or are taking medication so the treating person can be contacted.
- Do not try to argue someone out of suicide. Let them know you care, that they are not alone and that help is available.

If you think someone is considering suicide, call 911 or take the person to the nearest emergency department for professional help. "There are many professionals in Kent County committed to helping people who are struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts," said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer of the Kent County Health Department. "We need to be sure that people can easily find these important resources."

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and one call connects you to local resources. This line is available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24-hours a day and your call is free.

The moment one life ends from suicide, the pain and struggles begin for those left behind. The Healthy Kent Suicide Prevention Coalition is teamed up with Network180 for a **"Survivor Outreach Program."** Trained volunteers offer support to family members and friends who are struggling with loss. The hotline - which can be reached at **616.336.3909** - will put you in touch with a coordinator, who will contact the family in person or over the phone in the next 3-5 days.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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